

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 USIA-06
TRSE-00 SOE-02 DOE-11 CIAE-00 COME-00 /040 W
-----019347 030312Z /14
R 022101Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5222

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 03325

USOECD

EXCON

E.O. 11652: XGDS1
TAGS: ESTC, COCOM
SUBJ: COCOM CONFIDENTIALITY

REF: A. ROOT/BEACHNER LETTER OF JANUARY 18;
B. STATE 024301

1. US DEL WAS IN PROCESS OF PREPARING RESPONSE TO
ROOT LETTER (REF. A) WHEN REFTEL WAS RECEIVED.
FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF REF A US DEL CALLED ON COCOM
CHAIRMAN INDELICATO TO OBTAIN HIS INFORMAL REACTIONS
TO QUESTION OF COCOM CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE SUGGESTION
RAISED IN POSTSCRIPT OF LETTER.

2. INDELICATO FELT THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO
DENUDE COCOM OF ITS CONFIDENTIALITY BECAUSE OF THE
UNKNOWN CONSEQUENCES SUCH A MOVE MIGHT HAVE VIS A VIS
COCOM IN THE VARIOUS MEMBER COUNTRIES. SINCE COCOM
HAS NO JURIDICAL BASIS, BUT RATHER IS AN INFORMAL
COMMITTEE FOR COORDINATING NATIONAL EXPORT CONTROLS,
HE SAID, A DIMINUTION OF THE SECRECY WHICH SURROUNDS
IT MIGHT MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR SOME OF ITS MEMBERS TO
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PARTICIPATE IN SUCH COOPERATIVE EFFORTS. HE ALLUDED
TO THE DISCUSSION OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUE IN THE
EARLY 1950'S AT THE HEIGHT OF THE COLD WAR. CERTAINLY,
HE SAID, IF THE MEMBER COUNTRIES FELT THAT PUBLIC
EXPOSURE OF THE COMMITTEE'S COORDINATING ACTIVITIES
WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL AT THAT TIME, HOW MUCH MORE
THESE CONSIDERATIONS REMAIN TRUE TODAY IN AN ERA OF

AMBIVALENT DETENTE.

3. INDELICATO ALSO STATED THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE FOR THE U.S. TO SUGGEST FORMALLY IN THE COMMITTEE THAT THE ORGANIZATION'S BASIC DOCUMENTS DID NOT REALLY REQUIRE CLASSIFICATION. SUCH A SUGGESTION WOULD IMPLY THAT THE UNITED STATES WISHED TO ALTER THE GROUND RULES OF CONFIDENTIALITY WHICH THE OTHER MEMBERS HERETOFORE HAVE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL. HE ADDED THAT POSING THIS KIND OF DIFFICULT ISSUE FORMALLY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE COULD ITSELF HAVE A DAMAGING EFFECT. THE COMMITTEE WAS ALREADY STRAINED BY THE OTHER MEMBERS' RISING IMPATIENCE WITH THE OVERALL U.S. PERFORMANCE IN THE ORGANIZATION, HE SAID, AND THIS DID NOT APPEAR TO BE A PROPITIOUS MOMENT FOR SUCH AN APPROACH. HE SUGGESTED THAT IF THE US FELT THAT SUCH AN APPROACH WAS NECESSARY THAT IT BE CARRIED OUT, AT LEAST INITIALLY, ON AN INFORMAL BILATERAL BASIS. SUCH INFORMAL DISCUSSION WOULD PROVIDE AN INDICATION, HE SAID, OF THE GENERAL ACCEPTABILITY OF DECLASSIFICATION.

4. CHAIRMAN'S VIEWS REINFORCE US DEL FEELING THAT CONFIDENTIALITY CONTINUES TO BE ESSENTIAL TO THIS

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INFORMAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE, THE EXISTENCE OF WHICH IS NOT THE SUBJECT OF ANY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER DELS (FRENCH, DUTCH, AND ITALIAN) PRIOR TO RECENT CODEL STUDY MISSION VISIT, US DEL WAS LEFT WITH CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT OTHER MEMBER GOVERNMENTS STILL ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE CONFIDENTIALITY SURROUNDING THE COMMITTEE. FRENCH OFFICIALS STATED TO THE CODEL MISSION THAT THEY WOULD OPPOSE ANY MOVE TENDING TO DIMINISH THE PRESENT CONFIDENTIALITY RULES.

5. WE WOULD HOPE THAT DEPARTMENT COULD FIND WAYS OF RESPONDING TO CONGRESSIONAL REQUIREMENT SPELLED OUT IN ROOT LETTER WITHOUT VIOLATING COCOM CONFIDENTIALITY. WE WILL MAKE SOME SUGGESTIONS IN OUR RESPONSE TO ROOT LETTER. IF, HOWEVER, DEPARTMENT STILL FEELS IT NECESSARY TO REVIEW WITH OTHER MEMBERS THE APPROPRIATENESS OF CONTINUING TO CLASSIFY SPECIFIC COCOM DOCUMENTS, US DEL SUGGESTS THIS BE DONE INITIALLY ON AN INFORMAL BASIS BILATERALLY WITH OTHER COCOM DELEGATES. FOR SUCH AN APPROACH US DEL WOULD NEED TO BE PROVIDED WITH ARGUMENT JUSTIFYING VIEW THAT SPECIFIC COCOM DOCUMENTS COULD APPROPRIATELY BE DECLASSIFIED WITHOUT UNDERMINING THE BASIC CONFIDENTIAL

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UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THE NATURE OF THIS FORUM.
KATZ

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Litigation History:
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Review Release Event: n/a
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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3429552
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COCOM CONFIDENTIALITY
TAGS: ESTC, FR, COCOM
To: STATE
Type: TE
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